

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method of predicting outcomes of marketing campaigns comprising at least a first campaign step directed to a first target group and a second campaign steps directed to a second target group, wherein the second target group is a subset of the first target group and the campaign steps are to be performed consecutively, the method comprising:

determining a response probability for each of a plurality of customers in the first target group regarding ~~the~~ first campaign step directed to the first target group of a marketing campaign, the customers being intended targets of the marketing campaign;

determining a response value for each of the customers in the first target group regarding the first campaign step that indicates a predicted value of a response to the first campaign step of the marketing campaign by the customer; and

predicting an outcome of the first campaign step of the marketing campaign using the response probability and the response value;

using the response probabilities for the plurality of customers to predict a number of responses to be received if the first campaign step were performed toward the plurality of customers;

selecting the second target group of customers from the ~~plurality of customers~~ first target group using the response probabilities, the second target group being substantially equal to the predicted number of responses; and

predicting an outcome of performing also the second campaign step toward the second target group after the first campaign step, wherein the second target group is a subset of the first target group.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the predicted value is at least one selected from the group consisting of predicted revenue from the customer and predicted profit from the customer.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the predicted value is a predicted response cost associated with the customer.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the predicted value is a predicted cost of contacting the customer in the marketing campaign.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the response value is determined using a purchase history of the customer.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a purchase history is not available for a customer, further comprising identifying at least one similar customer for which a purchase history is available and using the at least one similar customer's purchase history to determine the response value.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the marketing campaign is to be directed also at additional customers for which no response value is determined, further comprising using a default response value for the additional customers in predicting the outcome of the marketing campaign.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the default response value is an average determined from responses to past marketing campaigns.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the target group initially is not equal to the predicted number of responses, further comprising adjusting the target group to be equal to the predicted number of responses.

11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one campaign step in the marketing campaign comprises a plurality of alternative campaign elements, further comprising assigning the customers to the campaign elements using an optimizing algorithm.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the optimizing algorithm assigns and reassigns the customers to the campaign elements while evaluating the predicted outcome of the marketing campaign, but does not reassign a customer to a campaign element to which the customer has previously been assigned.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the response value is determined for a particular marketing step in the marketing campaign.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the marketing step comprises contacting the customer by at least one selected from the group consisting of email, website advertisement, letter, telephone, fax and personal contact.

15. (Currently amended) A system for predicting outcomes of marketing campaigns comprising at least a first campaign step directed to a first target group and a second campaign steps directed to a second target group, wherein the second target group is a subset of the first target group and the campaign steps are to be performed consecutively, the system comprising:

program instructions tangibly embodied in a computer-readable medium and comprising a response prediction module that, when executed by a processor, i) determines a response probability for each of a plurality of customers in the first target group regarding ~~the~~ first campaign step directed to the first target group of a marketing campaign, the customers being intended targets of the marketing campaign, and ii) predicts a number of responses to be received if the first campaign step were performed toward the plurality of customers;

program instructions tangibly embodied in a computer-readable medium and comprising an evaluation module that, when executed by a processor, determines a response value for each of the customers in the first target group regarding the first campaign step that indicates a predicted value of a response to the first campaign step of the marketing campaign by the customer, and that predicts an outcome of the marketing campaign using the response probability and the response value; and

program instructions tangibly embodied in a computer-readable medium and comprising an assignment module that, when executed by a processor, selects a second target group of customers from the plurality of customers first target group using the response probabilities, the second target group being substantially equal to the predicted number of responses;

wherein the response prediction module predicts an outcome of performing also the second campaign step toward the second target group after the first campaign step, wherein the second target group is a subset of the first target group.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the response value is determined using a purchase history of the customer.

17. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein a purchase history is not available for a customer, wherein the response value is determined using a purchase history of at least one similar customer.

18. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the marketing campaign is to be directed also at additional customers for which no response value is determined, and wherein the evaluation module uses a default response value for the additional customers in predicting the outcome of the marketing campaign.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the default response value is an average determined from responses to past marketing campaigns.

20. (Previously presented) The system of claim 15, wherein the assignment module assigns the customers to the campaign elements using an optimizing algorithm.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the assignment module assigns and reassigns the customers to the campaign elements while evaluating the predicted outcome of the marketing campaign, but does not reassign a customer to a campaign element to which the customer has previously been assigned.

22. (Currently amended) Computer software, tangibly embodied in a computer-readable medium, for predicting outcomes of marketing campaigns, the software comprising instructions to perform operations comprising:

determines a response probability for each of a plurality of customers in a first target group regarding a first campaign step directed to the first target group of a marketing campaign, the customers being intended targets of the marketing campaign;

determines a response value for each of the customers in the first target group regarding the first campaign step that indicates a predicted value of a response to the first campaign step of the marketing campaign by the customer; and

predicts an outcome of the first campaign step of the marketing campaign using the response probability and the response value;

uses the response probabilities for the plurality of customers to predict a number of responses to be received if the first campaign step were performed toward the plurality of customers;

selects a second target group of customers from the ~~plurality of customers~~ first target group using the response probabilities, the second target group being substantially equal to the predicted number of responses; and

predicts an outcome of performing also ~~the~~ a second campaign step toward the second target group after the first campaign step, wherein the second target group is a subset of the first target group.